



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Offenham Church of England Voluntary Controlled First School

Myatt Road, Offenham, Evesham, WR11 8SD

Diocese: Worcester

Local authority: Worcestershire

Date of inspection: 5th March 2014

Date of last inspection: March 2009

School's unique reference number: 116835

Headteacher: Denise Oates

Inspector's name and number: Stephanie Boulter NS785

School context

Offenham VC First School is a smaller than average school, serving pupils from Reception to Year 5, with 103 pupils currently on role. Almost all come from a white British background and the number of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well below the national average. The proportion of pupils designating as having special educational needs is well above average. The school is situated in the rural area of the Vale of Evesham in a vibrant parish community.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Offenham VC First as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The strong relationships throughout the school, based on Christian love which result in outstanding attitudes and behaviour
- Christian values which are embedded in every aspect of school life and are known and followed by all members of the school community
- The inspirational and caring leadership of the headteacher and the religious education (RE) / collective worship co-ordinator that allows every pupil to feel valued and to achieve well
- Dedicated staff who go the extra mile for all pupils

Areas to improve

- Develop further the informal monitoring and evaluation carried out by all leaders and governors in order to create a documented and regular cycle which analyses rigorously the impact of the school's distinctive Christian character on all aspects of school life
- Introduce clear methods of self and peer assessment in RE to ensure all pupils have a clear understanding of their learning and how they can progress further

The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is outstanding at meeting the needs of all learners

Offenham VC First school is a vibrant, creative Christian family, with pupils who love their school, their work and their teachers. The inspirational vision of the headteacher is tangible in every aspect of school life, resulting in a highly developed understanding of spirituality, which is shared across the whole school. Pupils are enthusiastic about their learning and are encouraged to constantly challenge themselves resulting in outstanding progress across the ability range. This is particularly evident with pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) who make outstanding progress. Christian values are explicitly taught across the curriculum and as a result have a significant impact on pupils' spiritual and moral development. One pupil described how 'One of Jesus' friends took money to do something which was bad, that was not right'. The school's distinctiveness and effectiveness is also evident in the stimulating and creative ways in which it promotes its 'Very Important Values' (VIVs) which were chosen by parents, governors and staff. These include respect, responsibility, perseverance, friendship and truth and all are firmly embedded in the life of the school. Pupils are actively encouraged to look after one another and lunchtime supervisors regularly nominate pupils whom they have seen displaying the VIVs. These children and their actions are then celebrated in a celebration assembly. All around the school pupils sign their names to posters which promote ideas such as a recipe for good friendship; what they might give up for Lent; things they would like to see taken away from the world; and things they would add into the world. One pupil wrote 'I would take away greed and things that make people poorly or cry. I would add happiness, laughter and sharing'. Pupils, as a result of these experiences, understand the idea of love, forgiveness and tolerance which are then visible in the relationships inside and outside the classroom. As well as being able to apply the school's VIVs to their behaviour and learning, pupils also link them to Bible teachings both in the Old and New Testament. Parents are consulted in all aspects of school life. One parent described how, 'as parents we promote values at home, which are then confirmed at school and again when the children go to church or the vicar comes into school.' This has resulted in a fantastic triangle where shared values are consistent and lived out in everyday life. Teaching in RE uses a wide variety of creative strategies to engage and challenge the pupils. The RE coordinator is an inspirational leader, and all children enjoy the subject because they are allowed to have a voice. In an observed lesson which was outstanding, pupils were asked to think about what God would be like if he was a food. One pupil's response was 'God is like a big bag of Skittles, on the packet it says 'to be shared'. That means God is for everyone not for one person.' This lesson evoked such deep responses from the pupils that higher level thinking skills were evident throughout and moved the children on in their understanding of God. There is an intrinsic link with spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) and the values of the school, both in planning and in lessons. The RE coordinator is passionate about her subject, and the status of the subject is extremely high in the life of the school. The teaching of Christianity is outstanding as is the teaching of other world faiths.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship at Offenham is central to the life of the school and is the inspiration for promoting and learning about Christian values and biblical teachings. Worship is distinctively Christian and it is a time when children celebrate God, their school and each other. Children actively plan and lead worship, not only at school but also at local church services. They make important steps forward in their spiritual development as a result of engaging and interactive acts of worship such as Open the book, Out of the Box and Jack in the Box. The latter was introduced as a result of evaluation by 'The Crew' of the engagement of Reception children in worship. The impact of this freedom to make suggestions and take the initiative results in pupils who are confident and know that it is alright to have a go and not get things quite right all of the time. The values chosen by the school community are prominent in the planning of worship and there is excellent and sustained involvement with the local church. The vicar, who is also a governor, and the curate are loved and visibly effective presences within the daily life of the school. Children are secure in their developing understanding of the Trinity and how

God can impact on their lives. One pupil said 'the Spirit lives in everyone and helps them do great things'. Another pupil when asked about prayer said 'prayers are a thank you for all the things we have in our world, and for us to be sorry for those who have no homes or food or drink'. Eucharist is celebrated at the end of each term, with parents being invited to attend. As a result, pupils' understanding of the Eucharist in the Anglican church and its relevance to individuals is excellent. Pupil involvement in worship is extremely high and through this they understand how people who have a faith can make a difference in the world. One pupil wrote to Desmond Tutu after being inspired by an RE lesson. Desmond Tutu replied in person and this in turn inspired others to try creative and innovative ideas. Prayer is central to the life of the school. Parents said that their children repeat the prayers learned at school on a regular basis and love to write their own prayers, which are used in collective worship during the week and at special services. Staff, pupils, parents and governors regularly evaluate the impact of worship in school though this does need to be more formal, frequent and rigorous, leading to further strategic planning. Monitoring does currently result in some changes to the content of worship, which is constantly changing to meet the needs of all pupils. Reflection statements are put on the door leading from the assembly hall and also on the playground exit so that pupils can think about the teachings of the day and what it means to be a kind and caring friend during breaks. The proposed introduction of reflective areas and prayer bags are expected to further enhance the opportunities for the pupils to reflect.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school is outstanding

There is a strong clear Christian vision held by the headteacher and this vision, through inspirational leadership, is valued and shared by the whole school community. This results in a vibrant, caring school where all are valued as individuals who are created in God's image. The Christian distinctiveness of the school is evident everywhere, resulting in a community which recognises when they have made mistakes, are supported in rectifying them and are not afraid to take risks. The headteacher has pupils and staff at the centre of all decisions and policies, and governors support her determination to enable all staff and pupils to be the best they can be. Governors know the school well and are regular visitors. Self- evaluation does involve all groups in the school community, but more formal and rigorous monitoring strategies need to be implemented to ensure it informs future strategic planning for the whole school. The curriculum is informed by a distinctive Christian vision, which has a significant impact on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. RE and collective worship support the values and aims of the school effectively and successfully. Their leadership are given high priority and are inspirational in their planning and delivery. Staff and governors have a clear understanding of Christian distinctiveness and have opportunities to develop their role as leaders in church schools. From an established partnership with a school in Redditch and a developing link with a school in Germany, pupils appreciate a range of diverse cultures and the similarities and differences in cultures and faiths other than Christianity. Eye catching displays around the school both support and promote this reflecting the significant impact this school has on its pupils' spiritual development. Parents praise the school for the way it nurtures their children in love and Christian values. They feel part of the school community and state that the relationships and values that are lived and taught by the school impact on their children long after they have left the school. Links between the school and church are exemplary and result in excellent opportunities for pupils to be involved fully in the life of the village community. The headteacher, staff, governors, parents and the church describe Offenham VC First school as a family. This, along with its explicit and thoroughly embedded Christian values, makes it both distinctive and extremely effective as a Church school.